

SPIDERS FROM MILKWEED, *ASCLEPIAS SYRIACA* L., AT DUNNVILLE, ONTARIO¹

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ABSTRACT: On July 18, 19, 20, 1976 fifty spiders, including *Dictyna foliacea*, *Enoplognatha ovata*, *Theridula emertoni*, *Araneus cornutus*, *Philodroma cespitum* and *Phidippus clarus* were collected from milkweed, *Asclepias syriaca*, at Dunnville, Ontario, the type and location of the shelters and webs on the plants being noted.

DESCRIPTORS: Araneida, Dictynidae, Theridiidae, Araneidae, Thomisidae, Salticidae, Milkweed, Ontario.

On July 18, 19, 20, 1976, collections were made of spiders from plants of common milkweed, *Asclepias syriaca* L., in the southwest corner of Ward 1 (formerly Dunn Township) of Dunnville, Haldimand County, Ontario. The three days were warm, partly cloudy and with light southwest winds. The plants examined were between the edge of the pavement and the fence line of fields along roads. Several thousand plants were examined during the three days and when a spider was found on a plant it was sucked up with an aspirator or captured by clapping the flower or leaf on which it rested between the lid and jar of a cyanide jar. Fifty spiders were collected, 23 on July 18, 18 on July 19 and 9 on July 20. Each specimen was assigned a serial number from 1 to 50 and was preserved in fluid in a vial. Insect prey captured in a spider's web was assigned the same number as the spider. The spiders were identified by Dr. Robin Leech, Research Secretariat, Alberta Environment, Edmonton, Alberta. All specimens are deposited in the collection of the Department of Zoology, University of Western Ontario except seven noted as "kept" by Dr. Leech.

Spiders Collected:

Dictynidae

Dictyna foliacea (Hentz) – 10 females (1 kept)

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Theridiidae

Enoplognatha ovata (Clerck) – 2 females (1 kept)

Theridula emertoni Levi – 3 females (1 kept)

Theridula sp. – 17 immatures (4 males, 3 females, 10 of undetermined sex)

Araneidae

Araneus (Nuctenea) cornutus Clerck – 2 males (1 immature), 2 females (1 kept)

Thomisidae

Philodromus cespitum (Walckenaer) – 11 females (2 kept)

Salticidae

Phidippus clarus Keyserling – 1 male (kept), 2 females (1 kept)

Account of Collections

Dictyna foliacea (Hentz) – These were found on light webs spun across the width of leaves, eight across the upper surface of the leaf and two across the lower surface. Trapped on three of the webs on July 19 were 4, 12 and 1 small midges of the family Chironomidae. *D. foliacea* was the spider most commonly found on milkweed leaves at London, Ontario by Judd (1969) with a variety of small insects trapped on the webs. It was also found by Judd (1965b) on flowering heads of ox-eye daisy at London and Dunnville.

Enoplognatha ovata (Clerck) – These spiders had formed tubular shelters, one by tying two upper leaves of a plant along their length and the other by rolling a leaf inward along its length. In the former case the web held a dead beetle of the Family Lampyridae. *E. ovata* was found also in the drier regions of the Byron Bog at London by Judd (1965a).

Theridula emertoni Levi – These spiders formed light webs on the lower surface of leaves, one of them causing a slight bowing of the tip of the leaf toward the lower surface. Two webs each held a spherical egg case 3 mm. in diameter. Spiders of the genus *Theridula* are regularly found on bushes (Comstock, 1940), *T. emertoni* being reported from bushes and hemlock trees (Kaston and Kaston, 1953).

Theridula sp. – Seventeen spiders of this genus were not identified to species, owing to their immature condition; Dr. Leech expressed the opinion that they were probably *T. emertoni*. They were all on light webs spun across the width of the lower surface of leaves.

Araneus (Nuctenea) cornutus Clerck – These four spiders were in tubular shelters at the tip of the plant. In one the shelter was composed of the three small leaves at the tip of the plant, rolled around one another, and in the three others the shelter was formed by binding two leaves at the tip of the

plant, face to face, with silk. *A. cornutus* regularly inhabits rank herbage (Bristowe, 1958) and stays in a retreat during the day (Kaston and Kaston, 1953).

Philodromus cespitum (Walckenaer) — These spiders formed tubular shelters, most of them by tying two or three leaves at the tip of the plant lengthwise, face to face, others by rolling the edge of a leaf toward the lower surface of the leaf and others by rolling the tip of a leaf toward its lower surface. Three shelters included egg cases attached to the web in the shelter. *P. cespitum* was also found on milkweed leaves at London by Judd (1969).

Phidippus clarus Keyserling — These spiders formed shelters in leaves, two by rolling a leaf along its length and the other by tying two leaves together along their length. *P. clarus* was found also by Judd (1965a) on bushes in the Byron Bog at London.

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